



Testimony of

Phyllis Kornfeld, President
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S.B. 202 An Act Concerning Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids

Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 28, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. My name is Phyllis Kornfeld and I am President of AFT Connecticut Retirees. Our organization represents more than three thousand retired public and private sector workers.

I want to thank you for raising S.B. 202, An Act Concerning Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids. I am here to testify in support of this bill because so many people are making the difficult choice between being able to hear and making ends meet.

Hearing loss can greatly impact an individual's quality of life. Worker productivity, social skills, self-esteem, physical and emotional health and relationships with family, friends and co-workers are among the important areas negatively impacted when hearing loss is left untreated. All of these significantly improve with the use of hearing aids. Yet the cost of hearing aids often make them a prohibitive remedy.

Hearing impaired people whose hearing losses are not severe enough for cochlear implants must use hearing aids. The problem is that hearing aids are not usually covered by health insurance plans while cochlear implants are.

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expensive. A National Council on the Aging survey of seniors showed that 55% cited cost as a reason for not using hearing aids. This survey also found that untreated hearing loss has "serious emotional and social consequences."

S.B. 202 provides a modest benefit that will go a long way towards improving the quality of life for hearing impaired individuals. If cochlear implants are covered by insurance, hearing aids should be too. I urge you all to support this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.